

INFORMATION PAPER

DAPE-MPE
6 November 2006

SUBJECT: Army's Stop Loss Program

1. Purpose: To provide information for the attendees at the January 2007, SMA Nominative Command Sergeants Major Conference, relative to the Army's Stop Loss program and the numbers of Soldiers affected by the program.

2. Facts:

a. The focus of Army deployments is on trained and ready units, not individuals. Stop Loss is a management tool that effectively sustains a force that has trained together, to remain a cohesive element throughout its deployment. Losses caused by non-casualty oriented separations, retirements, and reassignments have the potential to adversely impact training, cohesion, and stability in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Noble Eagle (ONE) deploying units. This unmanaged turbulence precludes the delivery to the warfight of units which have enhanced combat effectiveness based on stability and having trained together for long periods of time.

b. The authority of the President, or his designee, to suspend certain laws, regulations, and policies that allow separation from active duty, including retirement has its genesis in law (Section 12305, Title 10, U.S.C.). When this authority is executed, it is commonly called "Stop Loss.

c. The desired outcome of implementing Stop Loss is to retain trained, experienced, and skilled manpower by suspending the laws, regulations, and policies mentioned above to ensure our formations, placed in harms way, remain cohesive, ready, and combat-effective elements, during and throughout their deployment.

d. Stop-Loss models. There are two stop loss models currently being used in support of the Army's effort in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

(1) Active Army (AA) Unit Stop Loss. Applicable to all Regular Army Soldiers assigned to organized AA units alerted or participating in OIF and OEF.

(2) Reserve Component (RC) Unit Stop Loss. Applicable to all Ready Reserve soldiers who are members of Army National Guard or United States Army Reserve assigned to RC units alerted or mobilized in accordance with Section 12302 or 12304, Title 10, U.S.C. for participation in ONE, OEF and OIF.

e. Current Stop Loss applicability: Army leadership fully understands that by executing Stop Loss the policy has, to some degree, disrupted the lives of Soldiers and their families. To minimize the impact of Stop Loss on our Soldiers, the Stop Loss unit programs are targeted to only affect Soldiers who are assigned to Active Army and/or Reserve Component units which are selected to participate in Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) and Noble Eagle (ONE). Soldiers assigned at the unit's are subject to Stop Loss at the unit's mobilization/deployment date minus 90 days, continues through the demobilization/redeployment date, plus a maximum of 90 days. The 90 days after return to the unit's

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permanent duty/demobilization station is used to provide our Soldiers time for transition activities (separation and retirement), for retention, and where applicable for processing for a Permanent Change of Station.

f. As of end of month September 2006, Stop Loss affected a total of 11,983 Soldiers from all Components (Active Army, 8, 045. Army National Guard, 2,132 and United States Army Reserve, 1,806). Since reaching large scale application the average monthly number of Soldiers affected by Stop Loss is approximately 13,000. It is noted that many of the Soldiers who were initially retained beyond their obligation by Stop Loss have voluntarily elected to remain in the military and reenlisted or extended their terms of service.

g. Way Ahead: There is not a specific end date for the current use of Stop Loss. The size of future troop rotations will in large measure determine the levels of Stop Loss needed in the future. Initiatives such as Force Stabilization (three year life cycle managed units), Modularity, and our Active Component/Reserve Component rebalancing should alleviate much stress on the force and will help mitigate Stop Loss in the future. In addition, the smaller overseas footprint associated with fixed long and short tours, coupled with reduced deployment requirements will also reduce the need to fully employ the Army's Stop Loss policy.

h. Clearly, Stop Loss is an issue with Soldiers that are affected. Although a small number of Soldiers have gone public over their concern with Stop Loss, it appears the great majority of Soldiers affected understand the need to keep trained, motivated, and cohesive teams together. All three components are doing extensive surveys and sensing sessions with our Soldiers to get their feedback and insights. To date there has been much discussion of concerns over issues such as deployments and family stress; however, Stop Loss does not appear to be an overbearing retention issue.

i. In summary, the focus of Army deployments is on trained and ready units, not individuals. Consequently, random and continuing unit losses caused by individually oriented separation, retirement, and replacement policies have the potential to adversely impact training, cohesion, stability, and readiness in the deploying units. Stop Loss is a program that effectively sustains a force that has trained together, and can remain a cohesive element throughout its deployment. Information relative to the AA and RC Unit Stop Loss programs is contained in MILPER Message 06-232 (AA), MILPER Message 03-040 (Army National Guard) and 03-041 (U.S. Army Reserve). MILPER Message can be viewed or downloaded from the following web site: <https://www.hrc.army.mil>.